

Ustad Ali Akbar Khan



SIGNATURE SERIES/Vol. 2
Three Ragas

USTAD ALI AKBAR KHAN

Sarod

PANDIT MAHAPURUSH MISRA

Tabla accompaniment

VOLUME 2

RAGAS:

Medhavi (21:25)

Khammaj (20:51)

Bhairavi Bhatiyar with Ragmala (22:44)



CD9002

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A M M P

Ustad Ali Akbar Khan was born in 1922 in the village of Shivpur, Bangladesh. He was trained in music by his father, the late Padma-Vibhusan Acharya Allauddin Khan, who is acknowledged as the greatest figure in North Indian music in this century. When he was three, his studies began with vocal music and a variety of other instruments with his father. He also studied drums with his uncle Fakir Aftabuddinsahib. Later, his father, deciding his son should concentrate on sarod, set a training and practice schedule of 18 hours a day. This continued for over 20 years.

In 1955 Yehudi Menuhin requested Khansahib (as he is called) to visit the United States where he performed at the Museum of Modern Art. At that time he made the first Western LP recording and the first United States television performance of Indian Classical Music on Allistair Cooke's "Omnibus."



Khansahib has received many awards including two Grammy Nominations, the "President of India Award," "Padma Bhusan," and most recently in 1988 the highly prestigious "Padma Vibhusan." This is the highest honor presented to a civilian in India.

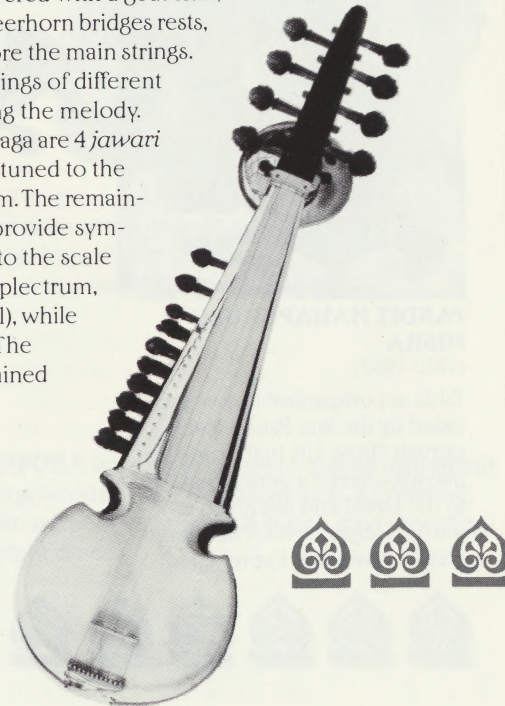
Ali Akbar Khan is an exceptional composer, recording artist, and teacher. This combination, along with an extensive list of accomplishments, has earned him the respect of his peers and the love and devotion of his audiences and students around the world.

In 1965, Khansahib started teaching in America. By 1967 he had opened the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, California where over six thousand students have passed through its doors. There he continues in the tradition of his father to teach from his vast wealth of knowledge the pure style of the *Baba Allauddin Gharana of Maibar*.

The **SAROD**, named SAROD-DHAYAK-VINA in Sanskrit, was invented by Bharat Muni. In the early 16th Century it was known as the SAROOD, which means "melody," in the Persian language. Gulam Ali Khan, court musician of King Wazid Ali Shah, made the first changes to the sarod.

Padma-Vibhusan Acharya Baba Allauddin Khan (Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's father) and Ustad Ayet Ali Khan (his uncle) modified the present shape of the sarod, which is over one-hundred-years old. Through his performances and teachings, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan continues to spread the knowledge of the sarod throughout the world.

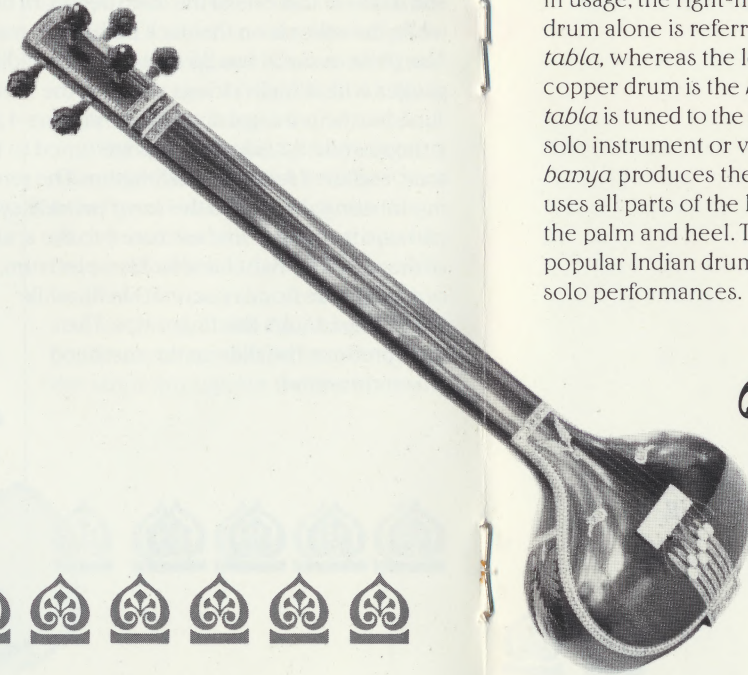
The sarod is hand carved from a single block of seasoned toon or teak wood. The fingerboard is a smooth, fretless, steel plate. The belly is covered with a goat skin, and it is here that one of the main deerhorn bridges rests, while the other is on the neck before the main strings. The present sarod has 25 metal strings of different gauges with 4 main strings carrying the melody. Tuned to the principal notes of the raga are 4 *jawari* strings, while 2 *chikari* strings are tuned to the tonic and used for drone and rhythm. The remaining 15 strings known as the *taraf* provide sympathetic resonance and are tuned to the scale of the raga. The right hand holds a plectrum, or *java* (made from a coconut shell), while the left hand uses the finger tips. The nails produce the slide or the sustained glissando sound.





**PANDIT MAHAPURUSH
MISRA**
(1932-1987)

Tabla accompaniment was provided by the late Pandit Mahapurush Misra. His high spirited playing offered a perfect balance to the Ustad and has given us a musical legacy which has been greatly loved and appreciated.



The **TABLA** is a term applied to a pair of Indian drums; however, in usage, the right-hand wooden drum alone is referred to as *tabla*, whereas the left-hand copper drum is the *banya*. The *tabla* is tuned to the tonic of the solo instrument or vocalist; the *banya* produces the bass sound. The drummer uses all parts of the hand: tips and sides of the fingers, the palm and heel. The tabla are perhaps the most popular Indian drums used for accompaniment and solo performances.



The **TANPURA** is a four, five, or six-stringed instrument with a long wooden neck and gourd base. It is played throughout a performance with its rich tone providing a constant drone.



Rag Medhavi

This rag is a combination of the ragas
Lom, *Hamir*, and *Maluā Kedār*.

The idea of a rag mixed with *Malua Kedar* was suggested by his father and completed by Khansahib on April 6, 1967. The rag's title might be translated "that intelligence which leads to God"—dedicated to Sri Rabindranath Tagore, the Nobel poet laureate of Bengal. The soft and full emotional contours of the rag belie its tricky complications of note patterns. The note **dha** in the lower register is colored with its upper neighbor, komal **ni**, in a captivating manner. A small sketch of the rag might be rendered thus:

S Ṇ Ḍ Ṗ Ḍ ṇ Ḍ Ṗ Ṇ Ḍ Ṇ S R G m G R S
G m Ḍ Ṇ Ṁ Ṗ Ḍ Ṇ Ṣ Ṇ Ḍ Ṗ Ṁ Ḍ Ṗ m G m R S

Mahapurush Misra creates a lyric and peaceful accompaniment in slow and fast tinal which is very effective in bringing out the serene and lofty mood of this rag.

(Lower forms of a note are in lower case letters.)



Rag Khammaj

Rag *Khammāj* is a traditional rag with several performance traditions.

Here it is treated in two manners:

first, light classical in chachar tal (14 beats). Khansahib is abstract in his phrasing, almost conversational, and at all times appealing and sweet in his filigree ornamental phrases.

Then he creates a fast movement in a more traditional instrumental *gat-tora* style in tinal (16 beats), in which he balances the light character of the first part with a perfectly restrained sense of proportion in the second. It is a tour de force of emotional content and form.

Ascending/descending:

Ṇ S G m P Ḍ Ṇ Ṣ Ṣ ṇ Ḍ Ṗ m G R S



Rag Bhairavi Bhatiyar

This rag is full of tonal surprises and wonder (*adbbuta ras*). The ragas *Bhairavi* and *Bhatiyar* are somewhat like black and white, each containing notes that the other lacks. The combination here is stunning. In the hands of a lesser musician than Khansahib, the two ragas would be very difficult to attach together, eventually involving all twelve notes of the chromatic scale.

Bhairavi: S r g m P d n Ś Ś n d P m g r S
 Bhatiyar: S m P D P m P G P G r S M D Ś
 Ś N ĩ N D P D N P D m P G P G r S

The performance also contains a *ragmala*, or garland of ragas—small phrases of the other ragas ingeniously woven together on the fabric of a single picture. The *gat* is in rupak tal, a seven-beat rhythm cycle.



The “Signature Series” is Ustad Ali Akbar Khan’s collective works from the legendary Connoisseur Society. They originally were recorded in the 60’s by David Jones on ½ inch, 2-channel tape operating at 30 ips using Sony C37 microphones and Ampex tape machines with custom-built, vacuum-tube recording electronics and mixer. Ustad Ali Akbar Khan’s memorable music in these 11 releases helped to create a new generation of listeners and students of North Indian Classical Music.

The original master tapes have been lovingly re-mastered by Bob Ludwig at Masterdisk, with Mark Levinson of Cello, Ltd. The Cello Audio Suite was used as the tape playback head preamplifier in the remastering process. All “Signature Series” releases will be available on the AMMP label.



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USTAD ALI AKBAR KHAN

Sarod

Pandit Mahapurush Misra

Tabla

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